

FPC Webinar Agenda



**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS®**

- Welcome – Victoria Givens, NAR
- Legislative Update & Recess Talking Points – Joe Harris, NAR
- Training Session – Jen Daulby, CMF
- Q&A

In-District Advocacy

Jen Daulby
CEO



CONGRESSIONAL
MANAGEMENT
FOUNDATION

Today's Agenda

- The Value of In-District Advocacy
- Determining the Best Way to Engage
- Tips for Successful Engagement



The Value of In-District Advocacy



In-District Advocacy

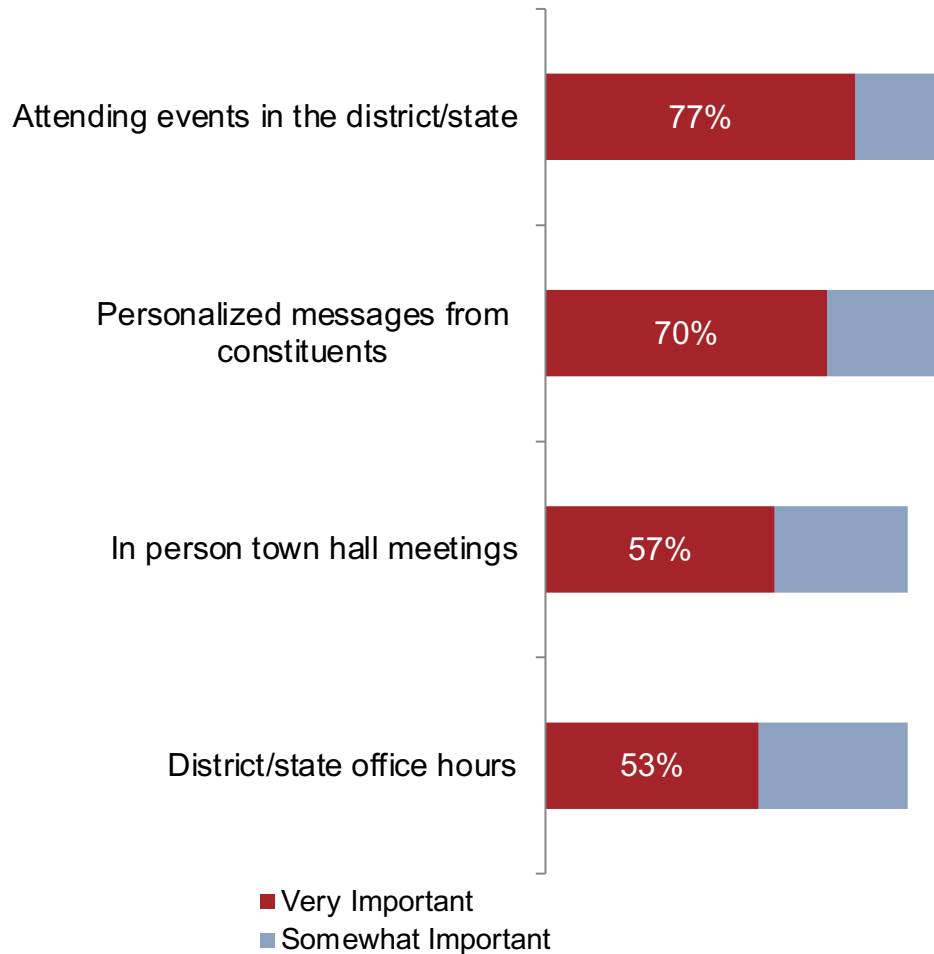
Congressional Insight



“In your opinion, how important are the following for understanding constituents' views and opinions?”



In-District Advocacy



Congressional Insight



*“The Member of Congress
prefers to have meetings
with constituent groups
in...?”*



In-District Advocacy

Washington, DC

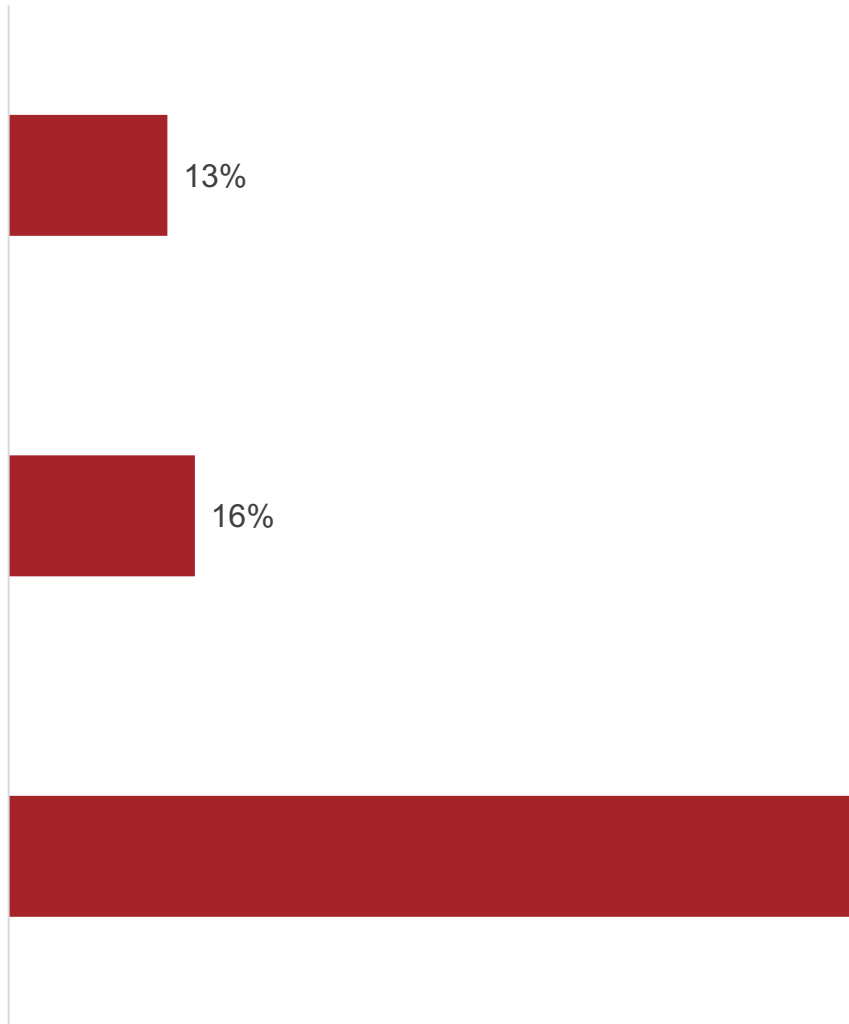
13%

The District

16%

No Preference

71%



Congressional Insight



*Recesses are not vacations;
they are district work
periods.*

*And for advocates they are
opportunities!*

“For larger core constituency groups,
I try to encourage meetings when
[the Congressman] is back in the
district and **can meet with all the
membership**, rather than just 2 or
3 people.”

-House Scheduler



In-District Advocacy

Benefits and Challenges of In-District Advocacy

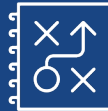
Benefits

- More time with a policymaker; they have less pressures on their schedule than in DC
- Less logistics for members of your organization
- More people can attend a meeting or event than in cramped DC offices
- Site visits or hands-on programming can be a major draw

Challenges

- Meeting availability is limited by the Congressional calendar and by geography
- Thus, it will usually take longer to get on a policymakers in-district schedule
- Legislative staff are in DC so additional follow up with the DC office may be needed for asks about specific policy
- Policymakers are people too! Many spend time with their family, limiting availability

Determining the Best Way to Engage



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“The most effective way to influence a lawmaker is for **a constituent to talk to a legislator** about how the policy will affect the person or a particular group.”

-Member of Congress



In-District Advocacy

First, get to Know the Congressional Schedule

...Especially the District Work Periods

STEVE SCALISE
MAJORITY LEADER

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
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House Calendar | 119th Congress | First Session

JOHN BARRASSO **DICK DURBIN**
Majority Whip Democratic Whip

UNITED STATES SENATE
119th Congress, 1st Session

2025

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
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Red dates = Senate not in session
○ = Federal Holiday

1st Session Continues—January 3, 2025
TARGET ANNOUNCEMENT—DECEMBER 19, 2025

www.congress.gov/calendars-and-schedules



In-District Advocacy

In-District Schedule of a Policymaker

In General...

- In session in Washington, DC are 3-4 days a week, and usually 3 weeks out of the month
- Each August and the October of an Election year are the largest continuous blocks of time for policymakers in their state or district
- Depending on the weekly congressional schedule, policymakers usually use Mondays, Fridays, Weekends, and any “recess weeks” for in-state/district meetings, site visits, or other events



Consider Your Initial Approach

Active Engagement Opportunities

- An opportunity created by a request you have made to engage with policymaker (e.g., District Office meeting, site visit to your organization)

Passive Engagement Opportunities

- An opportunity to engage with a policymaker at an event or setting their office has pre-arranged (e.g., open office hours, town halls, etc.)



Active Engagement Opportunity

Pros

- One-on-one engagement with the policymaker
- More relaxed setting and less time constraints than in DC
- Meeting can be specific to your issue or concern
- It's an opportunity to make a specific ask face-to-face

Cons

- It could take a long time to get on a policymaker's calendar
- You run the risk of not having the staffer present that you actually need in the meeting
- Follow-up and follow-through are both more challenging

Passive Engagement Opportunity

For Example

- Almost all policymakers have a form of open office hours and almost every office will tell you constituents rarely take advantage of these opportunities to engage.
- Townhall meetings – bringing several members of your organization and respectfully asking a question can get you on the policymaker's radar and build public support for your issue.
- Attending a community event the member has publicly said they will be attending – just a quick hello at a public event can go a long way in establishing a relationship.
- **Bad Form:** cornering a policymaker when they are at the grocery store or their child's sporting event.

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Check their website and sign up for email newsletters to know when a policymaker's in-district events, such as town halls or tele-town halls, are planned

CONGRESSMAN
BRETT GUTHRIE
SERVING THE SECOND DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY

Menu icon (three horizontal lines) and Search icon (magnifying glass) are visible in the top right corner.

Email Newsletter Signup

I send periodic emails about what is going on in Washington, and how I serve Kentuckians. To receive these emails, fill in the form below.

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

First Name*

Last Name*

Email Address*

Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are visible on the right side of the form.

Create Your Own Opportunities

Active Engagement Isn't Limited to Office Meetings

- Policymakers and staff are always looking for opportunities to engage with constituents and to garner local attention to key issues
- Getting out of the office and “on-site” is an opportunity to put a real-world face or story to a policy issue. Seeing something is often more powerful than talking about something.



Create Your Own Opportunities

Active Engagement Isn't Limited to Office Meetings

- Members want to meet constituents and if you are able to convene many, you have helped the member fulfill a core function of their job
- Planning in-district events can be a stress on staff – if you plan an event for a member, you have made their job easier!
- It's a way build more personal relationships with policymakers and staff that can yield benefits over time



Create Your Own Opportunities

Ideas for On-Site Engagement

Think of ways you can organize in-state/district events around your issue area

- Tour of a facility
- Company town hall
- Convening a meeting at a location where members of your organization work or will showcase your industry (e.g. school, farm, small business)
- An invitation to an event that is already occurring with your organization (e.g., conference, 5K walk, jobs fair, ribbon cutting) – Incorporating elected officials into community events where they can meet their constituents and learn more about your issue is very appealing to members.



Tips for Successful Engagement

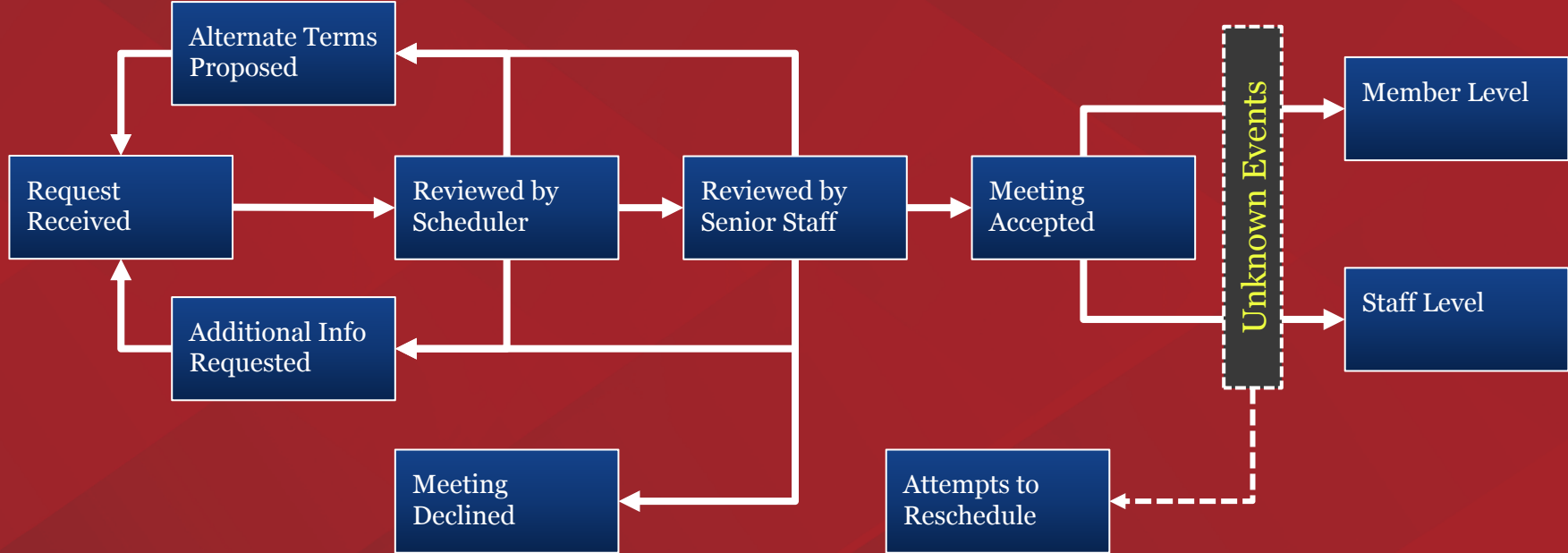


Getting on the In-District Schedule

- Each office in Congress is like a small business and they all work differently. Call one of the district offices to inquire how to make a in-district request.
- Some offices schedule from DC while others handle district scheduling in the district.
- District meetings and events require a lot of lead time. Specific requests to visit a facility or attend an event will take longer to get on a schedule.
- Plan to make scheduling requests several weeks in advance.



Overview of Typical Scheduling Review Process



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“How many weeks in advance should [a meeting] request be made for the Member to personally participate?”



In-District Advocacy

More than 6 Weeks

6%

5-6 Weeks

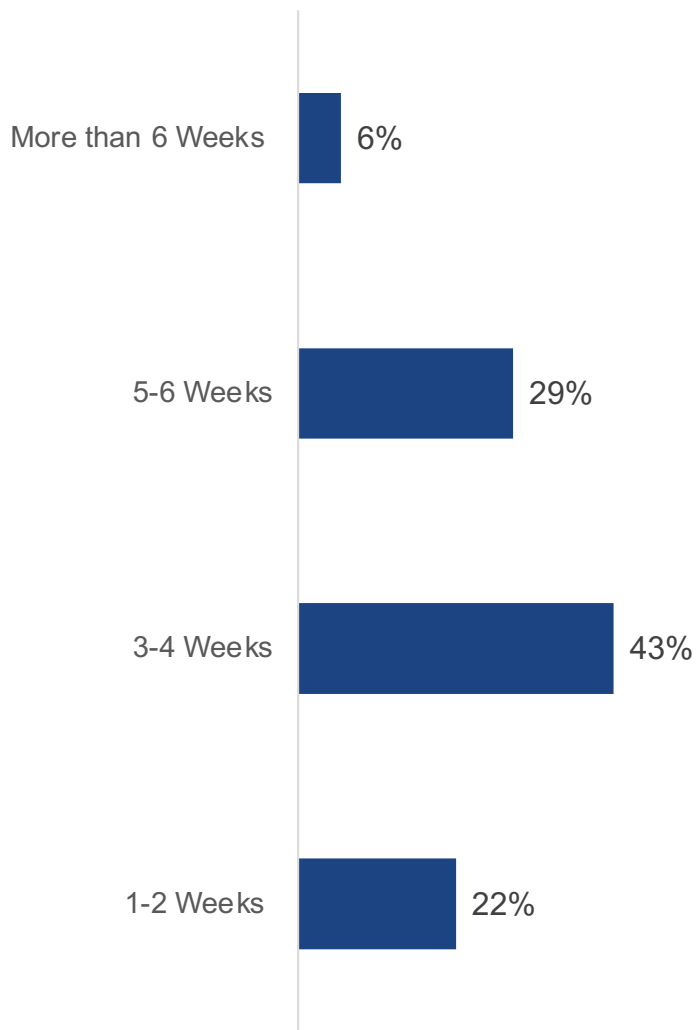
29%

3-4 Weeks

43%

1-2 Weeks

22%



How to Plan for In-District Engagement

Begin with the End in Mind

- Why is this meeting in the best interest of the member? In other words, if you were the member, why should they want to meet with you?
- What do you want the photo to look like?



How to Plan for In-District Engagement

Be Clear on *Your* Goal: Know exactly what you want to achieve. Are you seeking support for a bill? Providing information? Building a relationship? A clear goal helps you stay focused and make the best decisions on how to engage and on the best use of the time.



How to Plan for In-District Engagement

Know Your Issue: Be well-versed in the facts, stats, and relevant background information related to your issue.

Connect Your Issue to the State/District and Member's Priorities: Analyze how your issue aligns with the Member's interests or or affects their constituents.

Know Your History: What is the Policymaker's familiarity with your issue? Have they taken any previous action? Have you or someone from your organization ever met with the policymaker or their staff before?



Considerations for In-Office Meetings

Plan to Arrive Early, But Not Too Early: Arriving at an office 5 minutes before your meeting is MORE than enough time.

Practice and Prepare: Practice your pitch. If with a group, have a designated spokesperson or assign clear speaking roles.

Trees Falling in the Forest: Be sure to document the meeting.

- Make sure to get a picture and use social media as an opportunity to thank the policymaker for their time.
- Share a readout of your meeting with others in your organization.



Considerations for Events and Site-Visits

Establish Time Commitments: Determine how long the policymaker will be able to be at your event.

Establish Ground Rules: Coordinate ahead of time press preferences of the policymaker – are they ok if you take pictures, do you want the staff to take and post pictures, will anyone be doing a press release, what parts of the conversations should be off the record?



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“No surprises. Don’t ask us or the policymaker to do something that wasn’t agreed to up front.”

-House State Director



In-District Advocacy

Considerations for Events and Site-Visits

Prepare Your Team: Even if they're not involved in the event, tell your employees a policymaker will be coming to the office and share information about them.

Sweat the Details: Have you covered the minor logistical issues that can become big issues. (e.g. Does the policymaker have a place to park, have you pre-cleared the security protocols, did you provide detailed directions to the facility/location, do they have a cell phone number of someone in your organization for last minute questions? Etc.)



Considerations for Events and Site-Visits

Be Flexible: Prepare for the possibility of the policymaker running late or being rescheduled and be prepared to be flexible with your time

Allow for Unplanned Moments that bring Value:
Allow for the member to meet several people at your facility – don't just walk the member right to the executive offices.

But Stick to The Schedule: The policymaker's time is important...and so is your issue. For example, don't spend too long on introductions – make sure you get to the substance of your issue. And stay within your agreed upon time to leave a positive impression and strengthen the relationship.



In All Cases – Follow Up!

Reinforces Your Message: Follow-up ensures that your concerns or requests are remembered and reinforces the importance of the issue.

Builds Relationships: Regular follow-up helps establish a rapport with congressional offices, making it easier to communicate and influence future decisions.

Shows Commitment: Following up demonstrates that you are engaged, persistent, and invested in the issue, making your advocacy more impactful.

Opens Lines of Communication for Future Engagement: Advocacy isn't just having one meeting or attending one event. Following up allows you to turn a passive opportunity to an active one, or to create future opportunities to connect.



Q & A



In-District Advocacy

Thank You

